

CHAPTER VIII:
URBAN DESIGN

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Urban Design Strategy for Smithfield

Urban design, an often lost and ignored art in town planning, is a foundational element of this Comprehensive Plan. In its essence, urban design is nothing more than a way to sort out what is good and bad in the organization of a community's buildings, cultural features and landscape forms. It is a shaping process which attempts to creatively merge progress with preservation, innovation with conformance, organization with chaos and harmony with disharmony.

Throughout its initial stages of development, the process of organizing the river port town's buildings, cultural features and landscape forms was a simple task served well by its early grid street system. Thanks to the commitment of Town Staff and an active citizenry over the years, the Downtown Area served by this surviving grid system is still effectively organized and functions as a vibrant mixed use commercial core today. However, as growth and development began to far exceed Arthur Smith's original vision for the "new towne" on the Pagan River, the sorting process became all the more difficult beyond the boundaries of the original town grid. This trend has been accelerated during the past two decades, as progress through innovation has often overwhelmed interests in preservation, design conformance and growth management along the edges of the Downtown Area and in the surrounding rural areas. As a result, a large percentage of the most recent development in Town, especially along the major corridors leading into Town, fails to meet the high standards established and preserved in the Town's Historic District. Recognizing that the Historic District has evolved within a completely different context than that of the Town's major commercial corridors and rural residential neighborhoods, the Urban Design Plan approaches these differing areas accordingly. However, an overriding goal of the Plan is to insure that these different segments of the Town are not considered in a vacuum, but rather are studied as an interwoven community consisting of land uses, structures, cultural and historical features, landscapes and citizens that should function well together in establishing a strong sense of place that defines Smithfield as a unique and vibrant town.

Serving as the guiding element of Smithfield's growth management process, the Comprehensive Plan sets the tone and protocol for how future development and redevelopment within the town is to be shaped. From a town-wide perspective, the goal of urban design is to maintain, strengthen and enhance the unifying characteristics of the community and the patterns which yield its unique identity. From an individual project perspective, the goal of urban design is to insure that new buildings and landscape forms respect, preserve and conform with the characteristics which embody the "vision for Smithfield."

These underlying goals of urban design are consistent with the major and minor goals established by the Town with respect to urban design and community development for the Plan:

Major Urban Design Goal:

Protect and enhance both existing and future development in Smithfield through pro-active growth management programs and progressive community design guidelines.

Major Urban Design Planning Objectives:

- A. Protect and enhance the unique qualities of Smithfield's small town atmosphere, as well as its sense of history and place.
- B. Promote development opportunities which respect, preserve and protect the Town's ambience, historic properties, waterfront areas and sensitive environmental areas.
- C. Reduce structural decay of buildings throughout the Town by strengthening planning, zoning and building code enforcement.
- D. insure the high quality of future development in the Town by enacting creative urban design standards and implementation procedures.
- E. Emphasize strict adherence to well-conditioned urban design themes as well as the organized phasing of public infrastructure to support the Town's remaining undeveloped parcels.
- F. Promote developments that preserve water quality in the Town's rivers and creeks.

In pursuit of achieving these established planning goals and objectives, the Plan emphasizes the need to establish an "urban design framework" around which future development within Smithfield is to be patterned. This "urban design framework" establishes the "vocabulary" through which land use, architecture, landscape design, transportation, community facilities, recreational areas and open spaces are to be ordered. In turn, the public sector's management and orchestration of this "urban design framework" must be in touch with the demands of the marketplace, the rights of the property owner and the visual elements which create compatibility between tradition and progress.

The Plan identifies the "vision for Smithfield " on a macro-level and defines the essential implementation "linkages" through which the "vision" can be achieved. The concept of improving the "linkages" between the future land use plan and the Town's growth management tools has been a dominant planning theme in this update of the Plan. The Implementation Chapter (Chapter XII) of this Plan addresses the specific

improvements and upgrades to these "linkages" necessary to promote a successful urban design strategy.

Fortunately, it is not necessary to "reinvent" planning and zoning legislation in Virginia to provide the enabling structure for an effective urban design strategy. The Code of Virginia allows localities to regulate land development through zoning, subdivision and site planning ordinances and to protect its historic resources through the use of historic district and corridor regulations. The Town has already exhibited its firm commitment to establishing a sound urban design strategy by substantially revising its Zoning and Subdivision ordinances. This revision process included the expansion of zoning districts and the establishment of more contemporary site plan and subdivision plat standards for new development in Smithfield. This ordinance update provides the first important step towards establishing the linkages necessary to implement an effective urban design strategy. Additional refinements are necessary, however, to insure that the initial momentum established in the past year will continue to drive the efficient implementation of the Town's new urban design strategy. As noted in Chapter XII, the Plan recommends additional basic refinements, enhancements and additions to existing ordinances, guidelines and standards which, in combination with the Town's new Zoning and Subdivision ordinances, will create a well integrated set of growth management "tools" which support the Town's urban design goals and objectives.

In summary, the implementation recommendations include the following:

- A. Incorporation of an Entrance Corridor Overlay district.
- B. Preparation of a Corridor design guidelines manual.
- C. Enhancements to the Historic Preservation Overlay design guidelines.
- D. Update of the Town's Design and Construction Standards manual.
- E. Review the 1990 Chesapeake Bay Preservation Ordinance and related design guidelines; and update these documents to include recommendations contained in this Comprehensive Plan and recent changes state and federal regulations.
- F. Modifications to the Erosion and Sediment Control Ordinance.
- G. Design and construction of entrance gateway projects.
- H. Design and construction of corridor landscape improvements.
- I. Once the planned waterfront improvements have been completed, readdress the Waterfront Preservation Plan.
- J. Revision of the Waterfront Design Guidelines.

"Partnerships" in Urban Design

Success in urban design does not simply materialize from new ordinances or innovative language in the plan; real achievement is the result of a mutual commitment between the people of the community and its leaders. One of the most valuable lessons learned during the most recent planning effort has been that quality environments and design excellence require exhaustive work by both the private sector (*in*

defining specific market opportunities and project designs) and the public sector (*in ensuring project land use compatibility within the context of the Comprehensive Plan*). Often the "linkage" between good planning and effective implementation is short circuited due to lack of "elbow grease." Through mutual hard work, developers and local officials are challenged to undertake a greater effort to insure that the net result of good planning carries through to yield good development. This is called an "urban design partnership" and, as a result of the successes of "urban design partnership" efforts in many other communities, this Comprehensive Plan recommends that a similar cooperative approach be fundamental to any land development activity within the Town.

This Plan recognizes that, to be effective, land use implementation responsibilities must be shouldered by both the public and private sector alike. It acknowledges an extended process that unfolds sequentially as development occurs incrementally. The old adage goes that "a community is built one brick at a time." As Smithfield develops, the success of the Comprehensive Plan will be measured by the success (or failure) of any given land development project. The Plan's "vision" is defined by the many discrete decisions (both public and private) which address the matters of location, density, scale, infrastructure, visual quality and phasing of any particular project. Accordingly, the tools and methods to be incorporated into an effective "urban design partnership" must focus on each individual aspect of the land development process.

The previous Comprehensive Plan did not focus on urban design issues and did not deal with contemporary issues in suburban land development. In the 1999 Plan, an emphasis is placed on the Town's unique Planning Areas and Corridors. The Plan stresses the importance of creating an "urban design framework" for each of these Planning Areas and Corridors. This framework provides greater planning detail than that which is normally found in a traditional comprehensive plan. It identifies the future development opportunities and limitations for each area while establishing guidelines for the scale, order, intensity and architectural expression of that development.

If future growth is to be planned via strengthened linkages between the planning process and the land development controls, both public officials and private landowners/developers should embrace the concept of the "urban design partnerships." This is not a partnership in the common usage of the term, but, rather, it is a communication mechanism around which effective public/private dialogue can take place from the inception of a project to its completion. Similarly, in promoting a partnering of communications by and between the developer and regulator of the land use process, the Town does not want to place an undue burden on any applicant. As such, this process is structured so that the involved parties can fully explore planning issues, concerns, and site opportunities at every level in the land development process.

To be effective, the "urban design partnership" concept must be applied via close working relationships between the private developer, Town officials, and their design consultants on each and every land use application. Towards that end, the Plan promotes the idea of conducting "preapplication conferences" and "urban design work sessions" prior to each of the key milestones in the process: rezoning, preliminary plat, site plan, subdivision, erosion and sediment control, and building permits.

Fundamentals for Urban Design

The 1999 Comprehensive Plan recognizes that the fruits of quality urban design emerge from satisfying issues related to project feasibility, design continuity and site-specific sensitivities. Within any given real estate orientation and site planning exercise, certain fundamental urban design principles should be carefully tested within this context. These commonly accepted fundamental urban design principles have been used to formulate goals, objectives, specific design guidelines and strategies to be used in an attempt to protect the unique cultural and historical architectural character of Smithfield. Design guidelines provide a set of fundamental criteria for a community to achieve an identifiable character or image. They are typically based on the area's existing architectural and spatial relationships and the overall aesthetic qualities desired. The design guidelines provided in this chapter provide a framework for future design to insure the best design solutions are achieved within a given area.

The Plan emphasizes that every new and redevelopment project in Smithfield should strive to incorporate urban design fundamentals which embody the "Vision for Smithfield." In order to achieve urban development which respects the commonly-held urban design goals of the Plan, development applications should demonstrate a clear understanding of and appreciation for certain broader, but interrelated, Town-wide objectives:

- compatible inter-relationships among uses and use groupings,
- harmonious growth and expansion within the historic areas and corridors,
- optimal building locations throughout the community,
- appropriate architecture related to massing, image, form, and scale,
- preservation of open space and creation of recreational amenities, and
- efficient access, circulation and parking systems to serve development.

When viewed in its entirety, the Town's growth management program must be carefully coordinated to optimize these principles. As mentioned previously, there is no one manual that provides all the urban design solutions, but, rather, the Comprehensive Plan, zoning and subdivision ordinances, corridor and historic design guidelines, environmental regulations and other ordinances all combine to provide the requisite structure and substance to the Town's urban design framework. Equally important to the successful implementation of sound urban design principles within the Town is the intent of the guidelines to remove the mystery from the design review process and provide some measure of predictability for property owners. The guidelines also insure that Architectural Review Board decisions are objective and

consistent for building and sign projects in the Historic District, as well as in the proposed Corridor Protection District.

New development and redevelopment should seek an identity which is unique to Smithfield. This means that projects should be sensitive to the Town's historic traditions, architectural scale, cultural landmarks, environmental attributes, and community patterns. The following “vocabulary” for urban design should be considered in the public/private dialogue for new projects at the conceptual site planning stage:

1. Project Land Use and Density

- *Functional organization of site*
- *Land use relationships*
- *Net developable area*
- *Performance-based density*
- *Land use yield*
- *Compatibility with Comprehensive Plan*

2. Transportation and Circulation

- *Identify transportation hierarchies*
- *Vehicular access and circulation*
- *Pedestrian access and circulation*
- *Highway corridors and gateways*

3. Urban Design Vocabulary

- *Compatibility of scale and massing*
- *Compatibility of design and materials*
- *Landscape style and form*
- *Architectural style and detailing*
- *Historic relationships and expression*
- *Coherence and cohesion*
- *Color and tone*

4. Environment

- *Inventory of Assets*
- *Quality of ecological setting*
- *Preservation of natural systems*
- *Quality of environmental design*
- *Open space and conservation*
- *Waterfront characteristics*

5. Public Infrastructure

- *Adequate public facilities*
- *Utility and traffic impact analyses*
- *Responsibility for financing*
- *Proffers and conditional zoning*

6. Regional Considerations

- *Parks and recreation*
- *Schools and libraries*
- *Fire and police*
- *Municipal facilities and service*
- *Tourism influences*
- *Transportation linkages*
- *Marketplace realities*

Urban Design Guidelines

Quality urban design is more than just an architectural or landscaping concern. They emerge from satisfying a range of issues related to architectural compatibility, economic feasibility, marketplace acceptance, and environmental appropriateness. However, the form, scale, density, and appropriateness of development is essential to the "Vision for Smithfield." The guiding principle behind the recommended design review guidelines established for the Town of Smithfield should be to enhance the quality of life for all residents and visitors to the Town by preserving the character and desirable aesthetic features of the community. In order to preserve this character, it is necessary to protect significant features from destruction and to insure that new projects in the town do not detract from the identifiable character of the community. New construction projects and substantial renovation projects should respect the scale, materials, massing and setbacks of neighboring buildings and the overall streetscape, and should preserve and enhance the natural features present on the project site and along the street.

Thus, certain fundamental urban design principles should be carefully tested in conjunction with future land development applications in all areas of the town. The Plan has identified the following general design guidelines which developers and landowners are to address in preparing individual land use proposals:

A. Single Family Residential Development

General Site Design Principles

- New development should be compatible with the adopted Plan.
- New residential development should be reasonably-scaled and compatible with adjacent neighborhoods.
- Development densities should be performance-oriented, with total land use yields based on the "net developable area" concept.
- Residences should be clustered to conform with the Plan's goal of siting units in the most developable areas of a given property.
- Community designs should embrace sustainability principles and consider energy conservation in site planning.

Transportation Design Principles

- Residential neighborhood transportation planning should utilize a hierarchical system of internal roadways.
- Single family residences should not have direct access to major collector roads and highway arteries.

- Streets should be designed with minimal disturbance of the natural environment and should be sensitive to excessive earthwork and steeply sloped/highly erodible terrain features.
- Residential street alignments should reinforce a "neighborhood sense of scale" and should avoid monotonous street layouts: principles of traditional neighborhood design should be tested.
- On-street parking should be minimized in low-density single-family communities.
- Public utilities should be accommodated, to the extent possible, within proposed street rights-of-way.
- Residential streets should be oriented in order to maximize southern (solar) exposure for frontage residences to the extent possible.
- Sidewalks and walkways should be of appropriate size, based on the density of the neighborhood.
- Residential streets should not adversely impact sensitive environmental areas, as defined by the Comprehensive Plan and Chesapeake Bay Preservation Areas.

Landscape Design Principles

- Existing vegetation should be preserved and organized into a comprehensive community landscape design program.
- "Street trees" should be located along all neighborhood streets, using consistent grouping of species compatible with the supporting ecology and indigenous habitat.
- Landscape design concepts should be sensitive to the placement of utility infrastructure (and vice versa).
- Community entrances should incorporate special landscaping treatment, signage, lighting and other amenities to "identify" the project.
- A variety of landscape materials is encouraged.
- Neighborhood "focal points" should be identified during the site planning process, and varying scales and varieties (including seasonal diversity) of trees, shrubs and flowers should be employed to promote visual interest and quality.
- Large open spaces, natural areas and common areas which do not receive scheduled maintenance should employ low-maintenance landscape materials.

- Individual residential lots should be landscaped to protect solar access to residences, to protect residences from wind during the winter and to orient plantings to promote site air flow during hot weather.
- Private outdoor lighting, signage, mailboxes, accessory structures, fencing and site furnishings should be compatible with a consistent neighborhood design theme and be compatible with Smithfield architectural review and urban design guidelines.

Open Space and Environmental Principles

- Dominant natural features as well as sensitive environmental areas should be integrated into the design of the neighborhood .
- Each single-family development should provide sufficient levels of open space, conservation areas, "pocket-parks" and other recreation areas for its residents.
- Greenbelts along major transportation routes should be incorporated into the neighborhood open space system.
- Grassed swales should be employed for storm drainage, where possible, with structural outfalls located well above the floodplain limits.
- Single-family construction practices should incorporate enhanced erosion and sediment control measures on a lot-by-lot basis, employing Best Management Practices to the extent feasible.
- All electric and telephone utility lines should be placed underground with above ground appurtenances and service areas screened, bermed and/or landscaped from public view, when possible.
- Environmental management and best management practices in the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Areas should employ well coordinated site engineering and landscape design expertise which is sensitive to CBLAD and other regulatory criteria.

Architectural Design Principles

- Historic District and Tourism Corridor District design guidelines of the Town's Review Board should be followed where applicable.
- New housing should be of a consistent massing and scale within each neighborhood.
- Single-family building types should be selected and sited with sensitivity to and respect for the existing terrain and natural features of the site.

- Similar and visually compatible architectural materials should be utilized within a given cluster of single-family residences.
- Within single family neighborhoods, compatible design themes should be pursued, while avoiding repetitious facade treatments from house to house.
- Residential architecture should embrace sustainability principles and consider energy conservation in site planning.

B. Attached and Multifamily Residential Development

General Site Planning Principles

- New attached and multifamily residential development should be compatible with the adopted Comprehensive Plan.
- New attached and multifamily residential development should be designed employing a "neighborhood-scale" to housing orientations and massing. Excessively large neighborhoods should be avoided.
- Development densities should be performance-oriented, with total land use yields based on the "net developable area" concept. Site planning should be preceded by extensive environmental analysis.
- Residential buildings should be clustered to conform with the Plan's goal of siting units in the most developable areas (planning sub-areas).
- Site planning and housing design for these residential developments should consider potential highway noise impacts.
- Attached residential development site planning should evaluate and respond to solar-siting opportunities and other energy conservation site planning techniques.
- Where non-residential structures are to be incorporated into community designs, consideration should be given to architectural compatibility with residential units.
- Community designs should embrace sustainability principles and consider energy conservation in site planning.

Transportation Design Principles

- Transportation planning should utilize a hierarchical system of internal roadways, incorporating both public and private streets and private parking areas.

- Multifamily and attached residential units should not have direct access to any public street.
- Private drives and parking areas should be coordinated with the Town's street system.
- Streets and parking bays should be designed with minimal disturbance of the natural environment and should be sensitive to excessive earthwork and steeply sloped terrain features.
- Residential street alignments should reinforce a "neighborhood sense of scale" and should avoid linear, monotonous street layouts.
- A street and parking area signage system should provide for clear directions and safe movement throughout the neighborhood.
- On-street parking should be avoided on public streets within attached and multifamily communities, with reasonable provisions made for street standards to accommodate an emergency parking lane.
- Private off-street parking areas should be buffered and landscaped from primary views from public streets.
- Dedicated, screened off-street parking areas should be provided for special vehicle storage (campers, boats, recreational vehicles). Such vehicles should not be permitted in normal parking areas.
- Interior parking areas and private driveways should provide adequate turnaround areas for emergency and delivery vehicles.
- Proper linkages should be provided for pedestrian access from buildings to parking areas.
- A pedestrian/open space system linking neighborhood activity centers should be provided.
- Public utilities should be accommodated, to the extent possible, within proposed street rights-of-way.
- Driveways and parking areas in multifamily and attached neighborhoods should be oriented in order to maximize southern (solar) exposure and other energy conservation practices for residential buildings to the extent possible.
- Residential streets as well as private driveways and parking areas should not adversely impact the sensitive environmental areas, as defined by the Comprehensive Plan.

Landscape Design Principles

- Existing quality vegetation should be preserved and organized into a comprehensive community landscape design program.

- "Street trees" should be located along both public and private neighborhood streets, using consistent groupings of species compatible with the supporting ecology and indigenous habitat.
- Special landscape treatments should identify and reinforce neighborhood and building entry areas.
- Landscape design concepts should be sensitive to the placement of utility infrastructure (and vice versa).
- Community entrances should incorporate special landscaping treatment, signage, lighting and other landscape amenities to "identify" the project.
- Neighborhood "focal points" should be identified during the site planning process, and varying scales and varieties (including seasonal diversity) of trees, ornamental shrubs and flowers should be employed to promote visual interest and quality.
- Well landscaped special use areas, such as pools, tennis courts and other neighborhood recreation areas, should be provided.
- In elderly housing neighborhoods special recreational and landscaped amenities should be provided.
- Large open spaces, natural areas and common areas which are not likely to receive scheduled maintenance should employ low-maintenance landscape materials.
- Building clusters should be landscaped to protect solar access to residences, to protect residences from wind during the winter and to orient plantings to promote site air-flow during hot weather.
- Private outdoor lighting, signage, mailboxes, accessory structures, fencing and site furnishings should be compatible with a consistent neighborhood design theme and be compatible with Smithfield architectural review guidelines.
- Walls and fencing should be employed to enhance the privacy and enjoyment of outdoor spaces adjacent to residential units.

Open Space and Environmental Principles

- Dominant natural features as well as sensitive environmental areas should be integrated into the design of the neighborhood.
- Attached and multifamily residential projects should provide sufficient levels of open space, conservation areas, parks and other active recreation areas for its residents.
- Greenbelts along active, external transportation routes should be incorporated into the neighborhood open space system.
- Grassed swales should be employed for storm drainage, where possible, with structural outfalls located well above the floodplain limits.

- Parking lot drainage designs should seek to minimize cumulative runoff concentrations.
- Stormwater management facilities should be integral to neighborhood designs, emphasizing both water quality and runoff quantity control principles as well as minimizing the impacts on sensitive environment areas.
- All electric and telephone utility lines should be placed underground with above ground appurtenances and service areas screened, bermed and/or landscaped from public view, where possible.
- Screened and landscaped on-site storage areas for refuse and wastes should be provided for easy and safe access to the residents.
- Environmental management and best management practices in the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Areas should employ well coordinated site engineering and landscape design expertise which is sensitive to CBLAD and other regulatory criteria.

Architectural Design Principles

- Design guidelines of the Review Board for the historic district and tourism corridors should be followed where applicable.
- New housing should be of a consistent massing and scale within each neighborhood grouping or building cluster.
- Attached and multifamily building types should be selected and sited with sensitivity to and respect for the existing terrain and natural features of the site.
- Similar and visually compatible architectural materials should be utilized within a given cluster of neighborhood buildings.
- Within higher density neighborhoods, a consistent design theme should be pursued, while avoiding repetitious facade treatments from building to building.
- Unit siting should employ varied frontage setbacks and sensitivity to existing terrain.
- Siting of residential buildings should consider clustering units around courtyard-styled areas or other "thematic" landscape focal points in order to reinforce neighborhood scale and visual appeal from building approaches.
- Townhouse and multifamily architecture and supporting landscape designs should embrace sustainability principles and consider energy conservation in site planning.

C. Commercial and Office Development

General Site Planning Principles

- New commercial and office development should be compatible with the adopted Comprehensive Plan.
- New commercial and office development should be designed in a scale compatible with adjacent development and street systems.
- Commercial and office development densities should be performance-oriented, with total land use yields based on the "net developable area" concept; site planning should be preceded by extensive environmental analysis.
- Buildings should be clustered to conform with the Plan's goal of siting units in the most developable areas (planning sub-areas) and restricting development in sensitive environmental areas.
- Site planning and architectural designs for these non-residential developments should consider potential highway noise impacts.
- Site planning should evaluate and respond to solar-siting opportunities and other energy conservation site planning techniques.
- Major office projects and large employment centers should employ "campus" design programs, accentuating integrated site planning, landscaping and architectural concepts.
- Parking areas should be located outside of required yard areas.

Transportation Design Principles

- Transportation planning should utilize a hierarchical system of internal roadways, incorporating both public and private streets and private parking areas.
- Individual parking spaces for commercial and office developments should not directly access any public street. Private drives and parking areas should be coordinated with the street system.
- Streets and parking bays should be designed with minimal disturbance of the natural environment and should be sensitive to excessive earthwork and steeply sloped terrain features.
- Interior street alignments should reinforce an appropriate sense of scale relative to the proposed commercial development massing and should avoid linear, monotonous street layouts.
- A street and parking area signage system should provide for clear directions and safe movement throughout the planned development.

- On-street parking should be avoided on public streets serving commercial and office projects with reasonable provisions made for street standards to accommodate an emergency parking lane.
- Private off-street parking areas should be buffered and landscaped to the extent possible from primary views from public streets.
- Interior parking areas as well as private driveways and loading areas should provide adequate turnaround areas for emergency and delivery vehicles.
- Sidewalks should be provided for pedestrian access (emphasizing handicap access needs) from buildings to parking areas and adjacent properties.
- Public utilities should be accommodated, to the extent possible, within proposed street rights-of-way.
- Streets, private travelways and parking areas in commercial and office developments should be oriented in order to maximize southern (solar) exposure and other energy conservation practices for commercial buildings to the extent possible.
- Public street alignments as well as private drives and parking should not adversely impact the sensitive environmental areas, as defined by the Comprehensive Plan.

Landscape Design Principles

- Existing quality vegetation should be preserved and organized into a comprehensive community landscape design program.
- "Street trees" should be located along both public and private commercial streets, using consistent groupings of species compatible with the supporting ecology and indigenous habitat.
- Shade trees should be provided in landscaped medians in all parking lots, employing consistent species groupings to reinforce the character of development and ambience of the parking areas.
- Special landscape treatments should identify and reinforce major commercial or office entry areas as well as primary building entry zones.
- Landscape design concepts should be sensitive to the placement of utility infrastructure (and vice versa).
- Entrances from public streets should incorporate special landscaping treatment, signage, lighting and other landscape amenities to thematically "identify" the project.
- Significant physical "focal points" of the site should be identified during the conceptual planning process, and varying scales and varieties (including seasonal diversity) of trees, ornamental shrubs and flowers should be employed to promote visual interest and quality at key nodes.

- Large open spaces, natural areas and common areas which are not likely to receive scheduled maintenance should employ low-maintenance landscape materials.
- Building clusters should be landscaped to protect solar access to residences, to protect residences from wind during the winter and to orient plantings to promote site air-flow during hot weather.
- Outdoor lighting, commercial signage, directional signage, mailboxes, accessory structures, fencing and site furnishings should be compatible with a consistent project design theme and be compatible with Smithfield architectural review guidelines.
- Bus shelters of compatible architectural styling should be provided at major roadway entries into commercial and office developments, when required by the Town.

Open Space and Environmental Principles

- Dominant natural features as well as sensitive environmental areas should be integrated into the design of commercial and office areas.
- Commercial and office projects should provide sufficient levels of open space, conservation areas, parks and other recreation areas for its employees and visitors.
- Greenbelts along active, external transportation routes should be incorporated into the open space system.
- Grassed swales should be employed for storm drainage, where possible, with structural outfalls located well above the floodplain limits.
- Parking lot drainage designs should seek to minimize cumulative runoff concentrations.
- Stormwater management facilities should be integral to commercial and office designs, emphasizing both water quality and runoff quantity control principles as well as minimizing the impacts on sensitive environment areas.
- All electric and telephone utility lines should be placed underground with above ground appurtenances and service areas screened, bermed and/or landscaped from public view, where possible.
- Screened and landscaped on-site storage areas for refuse and wastes should be provided for easy and safe access to the residents.
- A landscaped "backdrop" should be established along the rear property lines of commercial development, with landscaping compatible with the screening needs of adjacent land uses.

- Environmental management and best management practices in the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Areas should employ well coordinated site engineering and landscape design expertise which is sensitive to CBLAD and other regulatory criteria.

Architectural Design Principles

- Design guidelines of the Review Board Committee for historic districts and tourism corridors should be followed where applicable.
- New commercial and office buildings should be of a consistent massing and scale within each grouping or building cluster.
- Retail and office building types should be selected and sited with sensitivity to and respect for the existing terrain and natural features of the site.
- Similar and visually compatible architectural materials should be utilized within a given cluster of commercial buildings.
- Within higher density commercial and office developments, a consistent design theme should be pursued, while avoiding repetitious facade treatments from building to building.
- Unit siting should employ varied frontage setbacks and sensitivity to existing terrain.
- Primary building entries should be segregated from service oriented entries.
- Siting of commercial buildings should consider clustering units around courtyard-like areas to reinforce the scale of the area and visual appeal from building approaches.
- Commercial architecture and landscape designs should embrace sustainability principles and consider energy conservation in site planning.

Historic District Design Guidelines

Smithfield currently has in place a fairly vigorous set of design standards which are applicable to its identified historic structures. In 1979, the Town established a Local Historic District designed to provide protection against the destruction of historic and architecturally significant areas, buildings, monuments or other features which contribute to the cultural, social, economic, political, artistic or architectural heritage of Smithfield. An Historic Preservation (HP) District Ordinance was also adopted in 1979 and established an overlay district within the Town's existing zoning ordinance that incorporates the boundary defined by the Local Historic District. The Historic Preservation District provides for the review of certain changes that affect the appearance of buildings located in the Local Historic District (and thus, within the HP District) by the Town's Board of Historic and Architectural Review. The application of this district is intended to create an atmosphere for compatible growth for future generations, to prevent the intrusion of environmental influences adverse to such purposes and to insure that new structures and uses will be in keeping with the character and scale of the HP District. The underlying zoning classifications, however, still govern the basic site features such as setbacks, lot sizes, height and use.

The protection of the Local Historic District has helped to Town to stabilize and improve property values, protect and enhance the Town's attractiveness to tourists and visitors and support and stimulate complimentary development appropriate to the prominence afforded properties included in the district. Benefits attributable to the promotion of superior design and appearance of structures constructed within this district will ultimately promote the public health, safety and general welfare of the citizens of Smithfield.

The development of this Local Historic District and the corresponding zoning overlay established the Town's first definitive measure towards protecting the architectural and historical integrity of its existing resources. The Town has taken several additional steps since then to build upon this original foundation in urban design. In 1981 the Town expanded the Local Historic District boundaries beyond the original downtown neighborhoods to include Riverview, Cedar Street, the open space west of Cary Street and the farmland surrounding Windsor Castle. The Town also introduced formal design guidelines for the Historic District in 1991. These Historic District Design Guidelines were established to provide direction to impacted property owners and the Board of Historic and Architectural Review in the regulation of future development and redevelopment within the Historic District. Most recently, the Town updated the Historic Preservation District (now referred to as the Historic Preservation Overlay, or HP-O, District) as part of its substantial revision of the Town Zoning Ordinance. As part of this revision, several new structures were added to the list of contributing or impacted properties within the district and minor amendments were made to the district regulations in order to incorporate more modern regulatory strategies. In the coming months, the Town should readdress the Historic Preservation Overlay design guidelines and consider incorporating enhancements to the guidelines which would serve to respond to the updated regulatory measures incorporated into the new Zoning Ordinance. The Town should also revisit the 1992 Waterfront Management Plan and consider the implications of the recent development of the Smithfield Foods corporate headquarters and the new Park on North Church Street on the future of the Wharf Hill area.

Recommended Implementation Strategies

Introduction of a Corridor Design Overlay District

As summarized earlier in this plan, in order for the Town to continue its ongoing success in protecting local historic resources and indeed, the heritage of Smithfield, it must respond to the new challenges confronting design issues in and around the Historic District. One of the most pressing of these new challenges focuses upon the impact of new development on the major transportation arteries leading into and out of the Downtown Area. As development pressures continue to increase in the region, additional urban design measures are needed to protect the Town's major entrance corridors. A major emphasis of the development of the 1999 Plan was the recognition of the unique character of the Town's entry corridors and arterial roads which serve as the gateways to Smithfield's historic district or points of tourism or cultural destinations. The Planning Commission identified five such major entrance corridors:

1. U.S. Route 258 from the west;
2. State Route 10 Bypass from the north;
3. State Route 10 Business from the north;
4. State Route 10/U.S. Route 258 from the southeast; and
5. Battery Park Road (Route 669) from the east.

As is stated in the General Land Use Plan in Chapter VI, the major entrance corridors leading into the Town and to the Downtown Area in particular should be articulated, offering a clear message that one is entering Smithfield. These entrances should offer a contrasting image from the surrounding commercial corridors and countryside. The corridors connecting the gateways and the Downtown should also offer a degree of visual continuity as distinct from their more suburban or rural sectors, thus enhancing the unique image of the Town.

As a means of effectively protecting its valuable entrance corridors, the Town should introduce design control measures for these corridors and gateways in order to stimulate complementary new development which will be compatible with Smithfield's historic character and which will enhance the Town's attractiveness to tourists, visitors and its residents. The recommended *Entrance Corridors Overlay (EC-O) District* would be established in accord with Section 15.1-503.2 of the Code of Virginia, as amended, to maintain, preserve, protect and enhance the historic character, cultural significance, economic vitality, visual quality and architectural excellence of the Town. The application of this district would be intended to insure that the major existing and planned routes of tourist access as well as other public access to the Town's local historic area are developed and maintained in a harmonious and compatible manner. The EC-O District regulations are designed to promote an atmosphere for compatible growth for future generations, to prevent the intrusion of land use and environmental influences adverse to such purposes, and to insure that new structures and uses will retain the character of both the proposed EC-O District and the HP-O District. Furthermore, the establishment of this new district would fulfill the Plan's goal of

recognizing the unique character of the Town's entrance corridors and arterial roads which serve as the gateways to Smithfield's historic districts, points of tourism or cultural destinations.

Establishment of Corridor Design Guidelines

Recommended design review within the Corridor Protection Districts is intended to protect and enhance the special character of the Historic Preservation District including the Downtown Area by insuring that the major access routes to the Town are developed and maintained in a harmonious and compatible manner. The intent is to encourage the improvement of the architectural and visual character of these major corridors, to prevent the intrusion of adverse environmental influences and to create an atmosphere for compatible future growth. In the near planning term, the Town should complete a detailed study to develop site design, landscape, signage and architectural design guidelines for the Town's major entrance corridors in order to establish a definitive set of measures that property owners and Staff can rely on with respect to the corridors. The main purpose of these guidelines is to improve the function and safety of the corridors, promote their aesthetic qualities and enhance the economic viability of the Town. At a bare minimum, the corridor design guidelines should provide guidance on the regulation of the following issues:

- *Corridor Regulation and Zoning Considerations*
- *Right-of-Way Design Considerations*
- *Maintenance, repair and new construction within the Corridor Protection Districts*
- *Site Design*
 - A. *Parking Setbacks*
 - B. *Parcel Access and Curb Cuts*
 - C. *Driveways*
 - D. *Site Entrances*
- *Driveway and Parking Lot Design*
- *Parcel Sidewalks*
- *Pedestrian Amenities and Outdoor Dining Areas*
- *Site Lighting*
- *Dumpsters, Equipment and Service Areas.*
- *Landscape Design*
- *Parking Lot Landscaping*
- *Building Perimeter Zones*
- *Subdivision Entrance Landscaping*
- *The feasibility of incorporating a formal greenbelt plan within the Town boundary, to be focused upon the primary entrance corridors*
- *Specific phasing, priority and funding recommendations for entrance gateway improvement projects*
- *Specific phasing, priority and funding recommendations for corridor landscape improvement projects*

Corridor System Options

The four general categories of “corridor system options” for exurban, suburban and urban streets are presented in tabular form on the following pages. These are to be employed by Town planners, VDOT officials, traffic engineers, transportation planners and urban design professionals for use in undertaking subsequent individual design programs on the Town’s major streets (both old and new).

CORRIDOR SYSTEM OPTIONS
Planning Elements for Smithfield Entrance Corridors
I PUBLIC RIGHT-OF-WAY AND TRANSPORTATION ELEMENTS

Palette of Elements	1 Exurban	2 Suburban	3 Urban
A Arterial Section and Paving	2-4 Lane Roads Graded Shoulder	2-4 Lane Roads Paved Shoulder	2-4 Lane Roads Curb and Gutter
B Median Design	Open, Not Delineated No Curb and Gutter	Varies; Delineated No Curb and Gutter	Consistent; Delineated Curb and Gutter
C Intersection Character	Uncontrolled Design Single Turn Lanes	Design Limitations Single Turn Lanes	Strict Controls Multiple At-Grade Lanes
D Pedestrian Facilities	None	Limited Sidewalks Occasional Paths/Asphalt	Organized Sidewalks Bike Paths/Concrete
E Transit Facilities	None/Regional Scale	Dispersed Designed Stops	Formal/High Usage Multiple Stops/Terminals
F Public Signage	Minimal Signage Rusticated Local Signs	Unorganized Non-Unified Design	Organized Unified Design
G Private Access Control	Uncoordinated Minimal Design Standards	Loosely Coordinated VDOT Standards	Coordinated/Controlled VDOT Urban Standards
H Storm Drainage	Median Ditches Shoulder Ditches/Swales	Mixed Ditches/UG Structures	Underground Structures
I Electric/Telephone	Above Ground Overhead	Mixed: Underground and Overhead	Organized: Underground
J Public Street Lighting	None	Lighting: (f) Density Intersection/Area Lighting	Uniform/Organized Formal Street Lighting
K Traffic Volumes	Low ADT High PHV LOS	Moderate ADT Adequate PHV LOS	High ADT Stressed PHV LOS
L Traffic Signalization and Controls	Little or None Institutional Only	Informal Facility Demand Based	Formal/Organized System Flow Based

CORRIDOR SYSTEM OPTIONS
Planning Elements for Smithfield Entrance Corridors
I. STREETScape AND LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Palette of Elements	1 Exurban	2 Suburban	3 Urban
A Median Landscaping (Public)	Natural/Limited Cultivation Minimal Maintenance	Opportunities for Cultivation Minimal Maintenance	Formal/Highly Cultivated High Maintenance
B Edge Landscaping (Public)	Cultivate Existing Selective Clearing/Planting	Pockets of Emphasis Add Plantings/Cultivate Existing	Formal/Street Trees Planting Beds
C Frontage Landscaping (Private)	Limited/Optional/By Owner Informal/Uncoordinated	Occasional/By Owner Limited Coordination	Frequent/Hardscape Required by Ordinance
D Gateways/Emphasis Areas	Evolve Historically Institutional/Cultural Basis	Private Development Commercial/Market Place	Urban/Formal Themes Driven by Urban Elements
E Signage (Public)	Minimal Signage Rusticated/Local Flavor	Free Standing Loose Organization	Dense/Cluttered Demand Organization
F Signage (Private)	Limited Design Control Rusticated/Uncoordinated	Free Standing/Uncoordinated Ordinance Driven	Grouped/Coordinated Ordinance Driven
G Visual Continuity	Dictated by Landforms, Views Vegetation & Villages	Limited, Difficult to Achieve Dictated by Ordinance	Dictated by Urban Form, Density, & Guidelines
H Street Furnishings/ Urban Hardscape	None	Disparate; Limited, Private Parks, Institutions	Frequent; Public/Private Transit, Plaza, Parks
I Lighting	None or Private Security Related	Limited Public; Private Dictated by Marketplace	Formal Public; Private Dictated by Ordinance
J Open Space	Expansive; Unorganized Driven by Market & Zoning	Fragmented; Unplanned Driven by Market & Zoning	Limited; Planned Driven by Zoning, Public
K Parking	Private Parking; Unorganized Front Yards	Private; Organization via Market & Zoning	Private via Zoning\$\$\$ Public via Politics\$\$\$

CORRIDOR SYSTEM OPTIONS
Planning Elements for Smithfield Entrance Corridors
II. CORRIDOR LAND USE ORGANIZATION AND ARCHITECTURAL FORM

Palette of Elements	1 Exurban	2 Suburban	3 Urban
A Land Use	Large Lots/Mixed Use Uses: Grandfathered	Med. Lot Size/Mixed Use Uses: Zoning Stimulus	Small Lot Size/Mixed Use Zoning & Design Stimulus
B Parking Organization (Private)	Fragmented; Minimal Naturally Screened/Front Yard	Organized by Use/Visibility Limited Screening	Well Organized/Dense Side or Rear Lot
C Architectural Character	Local, Very Diverse Unorganized	Franchise Driven Design Market Driven	Perceived Organization Materials, Massing
D Site Density/Intensity	Low Few Controls/Zoning	Medium Limited Controls/Zoning	High FAR Driven Density
E Quality of Facades	Range: (f) Age, Economic Viability	Range: (f) Age, Economic Viability	Range: (f) Age, Design Guidelines
F Geometry and Materials	Informal/Unorganized No Guidelines	Semi-Formal/Range Minimal Guidelines	Formal/Masonry Urban Guidelines
G Adaptability of Structure	Low Code Difficulty	Medium (f) Age, Mass, Site	High (f) Flexible Design
H Facility Age/ Economic Life	Broad Range (Trailers - Estates)	Short to Medium Term (Shopping Centers)	Medium to Long Term (Urban Core)
I Use Sustainability (Life Cycle)	Range Dictated by Age, Market	Limited Reuse Potential Dictated by Age, Market	Good Reuse Potential Dictated by Age, Market
J Historic/Cultural Significance	Rural Heritage Unthreatened	Dictated by Landmarks Threatened	Urban Heritage Controlled
K Continuity with Adjacent Uses	Low; Broad Diversity Uncontrolled	Clustered; Controlled by Zoning and Ownership	Diversity of Adjacent Uses

CORRIDOR SYSTEM OPTIONS
Planning Elements for Smithfield Entrance Corridors
IV. PUBLIC/PRIVATE IMPLEMENTATION AND FUNDING

Palette of Elements	1 Exurban	2 Suburban	3 Urban
A Zoning and Planning	Unsophisticated Few Design Controls	Strip Frontage Controlled by Site Plan	Urban Core; Extensive Zoning and Design
B Land Use Management Political Support	Laissez Faire Limited Support	Respond to Stimuli Bureaucratic	Good Leadership Pro-Active
C Public Infrastructure Improvements	By Locality Limited	By Private Design Per Ordinance	Public & Private Ordinance/Politics
D Landscape Improvements	Private Only None Required	Private, by Ordinance Public, by Initiative	Private, by Ordinance Public, by Policy
E Private Building Improvements	Private: Driven by Age, Demand, Code	Private: Driven by Age, Demand, Code	Private: per Need Public: per Initiative
F Public Project Fiscal Planning	CIP: Major Projects Only (Roads, Schools, Sewer) No Urban Design	CIP: Major Projects Grants: Special Projects Limited Urban Design	CIP: Major Projects Grants: Pro-Active Frequent Urban Design
G Private Project Fiscal Planning	CIP: None None	CIP: Remote Grants: Limited	CIP: Public Incentives Grants: Sponsorship
H Private Project Fiscal Planning	Service Districts: Politically Infeasible	Service Districts: Marginally Feasible	Service Districts Frequently Employed
I Special Fiscal Financial Techniques	Corridor Overlay Districts, Design Guidelines, Performance Zoning: Marginally Feasible	Corridor Overlay Districts, Design Guidelines, Performance Zoning: Feasible	Corridor Overlay Districts, Design Assistance Performance Zoning: Feasible; Commonplace
J Special Planning & Zoning Tools	Limited Low Demand	Good Pockets of Opportunity	Good to Excellent Strong Market Support